

Impératrice

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/38967675) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/38967675>.

Rating:	Mature
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Categories:	F/M , Gen , M/M
Fandoms:	Wiedźmin The Witcher - All Media Types , Wiedźmin The Witcher - Netflix , Wiedźmin The Witcher - Nightmare of the Wolf , Wiedźmin The Witcher (Video Game)
Relationships:	Geralt z Rivii Geralt of Rivia/Jaskier , Dandelion , Vesemir/Illyana Zerbst , Filavandrel aén Fídháil/Luka , Remus/Zofia Essi Pankratz (OfC)
Characters:	Cirilla Fiona Elen Riannon , Illyana Zerbst , Luka (The Witcher) , Vesemir (The Witcher) , Filavandrel aén Fídháil , Geralt z Rivii Geralt of Rivia , Lambert (The Witcher) , Eskel (The Witcher) , Remus (The Witcher) , Zofia Essi Pankratz (OfC) , Tetra Gilcrest , Deglan (The Witcher) , King Dagread , Kitsu - Character
Additional Tags:	Past Geralt z Rivii Geralt of Rivia/Yennefer z Vengerbergu Yennefer of Vengerberg , Past One-Sided Geralt z Rivii Geralt of Rivia/Jaskier , Dandelion , Past Jaskier Dandelion/Priscilla , Time Travel Fix-It , Time Travel , Alternate Universe - Time Travel , War!Cirilla , Implied/Referenced Rape/Non-con , miscarriage (mention)
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2022-05-13 Words: 10,287 Chapters: 2/2

Impératrice

by [UldAses](#)

Summary

Battling the Wild Hunt was hard, maybe too hard for her alone. Of course, she has the Witchers on her side but she wished she had more of them on hand. Her adopted little sister asked her why she won't go to the past to save them before the sack. Then, she remembered Vesemir's stories.

Notes

Warning: Death, Torture (not too graphic), Mention of marital rape & beating (wife and child) and miscarriages due to beating.

Timeline loosely based on Netflix WitcherVerse

Art by: liaonyxrayne (Lia)

Beta by: kenwave (Emil)

If you find any mistakes, that just mean that I didn't see kenwave's notes 😊

For Kaer Morhen Big Bang 2022

Chapter 1



On Tumblr [here](#) (go check her, her art is amazing!)



Kaer Morhen, after the Wild Hunt's Attack

Cirilla Fiona Elen Riannon looked at Kaer Morhen, or what was left of it and sighed.

“Is this really a good idea?”

- Of course! It's one of mine!” The voice who answered belonged to Zofia Essi Pankratz.

Zofia was Jaskier and Priscilla's daughter. She was conceived after what was called 'The Djinn disaster'. Jaskier, who had loved Geralt for years, knew that Yennefer wouldn't be like the others women the witcher shared a bed with; and Priscilla grieved for the lover she just lose to illness. Not to say that they didn't loved their daughter.

Quite the contrary, in fact! Zofia was the apple of their eyes. She inherited Priscilla's blonde hair and Jaskier's blue eyes, their ability with the lute and Jaskier's inability to flirt without sounding like a fool.

They were 5 years apart, not that much. When Ciri was 15 and still in training, words got to Kaer Morhen that Jaskier was being tracked by Nilfgaard. Geralt wanted to get the bard, not only to apologize but also to warn him. But it was winter, the path to the old fortress would close soon enough.

It was a surprise when Lambert arrived, his cat (that he thought dead), a bard, a trobairitz and their child in tow. The first thing Priscilla did was to slap Geralt for "*breaking the heart of my poor best friend*". They, then, proceed to introduce everyone. Zofia was ten, a little bit of a tomboy and already a very opinionated person.

"You're just like Uncle Jaskier..."

- Well Cirilla , you're just like Uncle Geralt."

They smiled at each other like the devilish little imps they were and laughed out loud, bringing tears to their eyes.

"I miss them, Ciri..." Zofia hugged who she always considered her elder sister.

"I know Zofia, I miss them too. But we remember the stories Uncle Vesemir said to us, right? And we have Luka's medallion, thanks to Dagread and his successors being idiots. We can go back and save the Witchers, just like you said!

- I just wish mama and papa could be there.

- I wish they all could be there. It's not going to be easy, letting go of everything, but we have each other and it's good enough, isn't it?

- Yes, it is." She took a deep breath, dried her tears and looked determined.

“Let’s save Uncle Luka and the Witchers!”

Ciri smiled at her brightly and they went to the old laboratory. The one that saw the death of the Witchers’ Mages.



Luka was in deep shit. Really. He would have loved to have a grand death, maybe saving a family from a monster like a leshen. But he, apparently, was going to die because Deglan and his fucking mages was breeding new monsters.

He heard the heartbeat of Lady Zerbst, which he was starting to become familiar with. She made sure that he was treated decently. That he got enough food, water and even some blankets so he wouldn’t get cold. Vesemir was so damn lucky to have a friend like her growing up.

Vesemir better man up and make her last years worth it. It was obvious that the stupid wolf had a crush on her every time he talked about her (not often, really but enough to see it). And it’s obvious now that she still has feelings for that silly wolf.

Suddenly, he could feel something in the air. A change, a cry of victory from the Chaos and a portal appeared between him and the king of Kaedwen. A portal like he’d never seen.

It wasn’t the colour of most of Mages’ portal, white but a very light greenish white. There was also some sound interferences but barely audible, even for a witcher. Two people stood there. One was a young woman with ashen hair, green eyes and, yes, a wolf medallion around her neck. The other, a bit younger, had long blonde hair and very beautiful blue eyes. A lute was on her back.

“Who are you? What are you doing here? How did you get in??

- I’m Ciri, this is Zofia and I’m here to warn you. If you kill the Witchers, you’re going down as the King who made it possible for the Wild Hunt to win.” King Dagread wasn’t a great King. He wasn’t even a good King.

“And who are you to talk to us like that?

- Maybe it would be better if I wore an accessory that my ancestors have worn.” From her bag, she withdrew a crown. She put it on her head. It was the exact same crown as Dagread.

“But... But...” Dagread looked ready to pass out.

“Yes. That means I’m unfortunately your descendant. I’m not overjoyed either. But I need all the Witchers available so I’m stealing the one you have.”

The girls came closer to Luka.

“Are you ready to go home?” Luka could only nod. He hated being a witcher but Kaer Morhen was where all his friends were.

“I’ll come with you.” Illyana had looked at the discussion with great interest.

“You’re Illyana Zerbst, aren’t you?” The youngest spoke.

“I’m indeed.”

- Uncle Vesemir is going to be so pleased! Right Ciri?

- Both of you will need to leave the fortress with the children.” Both Illyana and Zofia nodded.

“No wait! Wait a minute! We didn’t give authorization to leave! He needs to be made into an example!”

Ciri was already creating the portal when she looked at Dagread and said

“Do not worry. There’s going to be an example soon enough.” Not ten seconds later, they were gone.



When they arrived at the doors of Kaer Morhen, the mob wasn’t there yet.

“We have some time. Let’s go inside.”

Ciri entered the fortress first, followed by Luka, Zofia and Illyana.

The castle was preparing for dinner but you could hear (if you had witcher hearing) an argument. Luka recognized Vesemir and Deglan's voices.

"Zofia?"

The bardess-in-training decided to play "The Song of the White Wolf", certain that most of the inhabitants of Kaer Morhen would be intrigued, either by the song or by the fact that someone was singing in their hall.

When most of them were in the hall, which included Vesemir and Deglan, Ciri looked at them all and said

"I think we need to talk."



Deglan didn't like taking orders from someone else. He knew his job, he knew his brothers, he didn't need anyone to tell him what to do.

So, when the girl with the wolf medallion said, with a commanding voice, that they needed to talk, he took a few seconds to answer. She got the medallion, the swords (silver and steel) and some scars that was proof enough of her status as witcher. Or at least, that she was trained by a wolf witcher. That was good enough for him.

"And about what?"

- About how your experiments stop NOW." Of course, Reidrich would have none of it.

"And who are you to tell us what to do? You wouldn't understand the sacrifices we've done."

- Sacrifices you did?" It was the little blonde one who answered. *"You did no sacrifice at all. You're just perverted mages who think they can do whatever they want with no repercussions. You didn't sacrifice anything. Not even the conscience you said you did gave up. You didn't had one to begin with."*

The Mages were pissed off.

“I’m Cirilla and I come from the future. A very close one, a little bit more than a century. Do you know how many Witchers were still alive when I left? None. I’m the last Witcher.”

Whispers were heard, full of scepticism. After all, Kaer Morhen was full of Witchers. How could they all die in less than a century? And no one to replace them?

“I’m Zofia and I’m a bardess-in-training. I hear some of you and I understand your disbelief. You tell yourself ‘How is this even possible? No more witchers? In a century? What is this fraud?’ Alas, dear friends, it is not a sick joke. Most of you will die...” She took a moment to breath tragically *“tonight!”*.

The room erupted in protest.

“If what you said is true, now, more than ever, we need to experiment! We need more children to make more witchers.

- You have a 70% death rate. You need to work on your trials first.

- And what a bard would know? Most of the children are unwanted. Who cares if they die?

- Is that what you all think?” Asked Cirilla to the Mages. *“That your experimentation is more valuable than children’s lives?”*

Deglan sneered at the Mages. The whole bunch didn’t care about his boys. And it’s not like he wanted to experiment on beings. He didn’t mind the monsters. But what Vesemir said. Elven children. That was not what was agreed upon.

He was okay with breeding new types of monsters. After all, who knew when a new Conjunction of Spheres would happened. And who knew what sort of monsters they would bring? But cross-breeding monsters and intelligent beings? That was a line he refused to cross. And the mages knew it! They agreed that beings wouldn’t be involved, even less children!

He was already haunted by the ghosts of the children who have died during the trials, the ones he hadn’t been able to protect. He suspected for a long time that these barbaric magic users have been desacralizing the bodies of his children. He got confirmation not too long ago. If he could, he would had killed the lot of them.

He was impressed then, when Ciri appeared behind each mages and decapitated them, so quickly they could not even fight back.

“What’s going to happen now?” asked Luka. Deglan looked at Cirilla, waiting patiently for her answer and he saw here and there, the future of the Witchers.

“We’re going to fight the Sorceress Tetra and her goons. I’ll try to talk to Kitsu. All witchers who didn’t have five years under their belt are going to leave with the humans and the children.

- We need protection.” added Zofia. “When I said most of you were going to die tonight, I wasn’t kidding. They’re going to kill everyone. Including the few babies in the nursery.”

“I’m an old woman. My life is almost over. But these children deserve a chance to live.” The protestations became quieter after that.

“Once the battle is finished, we will take care of everyone needing healing and then I’ll retrieve our wanderers. Zofia and I decided that the lake would be a good place to wait for the battle to end.”

The witchers split into two groups. The youngest ones decided to raid the pantries, except for 5 of them, who joined Vesemir, who decided to lead Illyana and Zofia to the nursery.

There were three babies, from six months old to almost one year old. Illyana took the youngest and Zofia the oldest. One of the Witcher, a young lad who looked very laid back and was named Gwain took the last one. All the others took clothes, some toys and other baby’s stuff. They left the fortress in the hour.



Kaer Morhen

The preparations for the battle didn’t take too long. Ciri remembered everything Vesemir told her. Because it resonated so well with her own experience. The loss, the guilt, the feeling of helplessness. But now, she could change everything. She would change everything. The Wild Hunt was just a part of the problems plaguing the Continent.

Mages, who thought themselves so superiors to everyone else. So untouchable that they have the right to experiment on dead boys’ bodies, on Black Sun’s girls, on non-humans... They have no limit and, like Zofia said, no conscience.

Royals, who thought they have the right to rule the world according to their ever-changing moods. Who let the throne to their mad child because it's the first born or the only son and it's the law. Who didn't care if the peasantry live or die because the taxes were too high.

Humans, who thought being human was the epitome of the gods' will. Who were ready to sold their half-human children instead of protecting them from a genocide. Who are so quick to blame others for their own failures.

No, there was a lot of problems on the Continent and Cirilla and Zofia were dead serious about changing everything. They were, indeed, talking about it even before coming there. They had to adapt the plan a little bit but they would make it work!

The witchers were in their post when Tetra and Kitsu arrived. Both were intrigued by the woman in front of them.

“ This is my first, and only, warning. Leave or suffer the consequences of your folly.

- And who are you, to threaten us? I'm Tetra, descendant of the First Mage.

- I am Cirilla Fiona Elen Riannon, Lady of Space and Time, the White Flame. I am Hen Ichaer, Elder Blood.

- This is not possible!” cried out Tetra. Kitsu looked at Ciri, intrigued but angry.

“Why are you siding with them? They destroyed my home! They took my child!

- Vesemir? Did you destroy Kitsu's home? Took her child?

- What? I didn't destroy her home, why would I do that? And the child was taken by Filavandrel, so she could be raised amongst her people.

- She was all I had!

- You don't have to be alone, Kitsu. Let us help you. There are others, like you, who some people would call monster but are just beings wanting to live in peace. Let us help you build back your family and your home." Kitsu hesitated. And Tetra attacked her. Or at least, tried to attack her, because a shield, not so different of a Quen's shield but more radiant, protected the half-elf, half-mahr girl.

Kitsu hissed, angry at the mage.

"YOU! You're the one who destroyed my home!!

- And it was so easy..." added Tetra with a smirk.

"Kitsu!" called Ciri. *"Kitsu, please stay away from the fight. I can help you rebuilt your home but I need you alive and unhurt. Please, trust me."*

Kitsu hesitated but finally decided to leave, probably for the ruins of her home.

"Well, I'll take care of her when I'm finished here. It's just going to take more time." Tetra opened multiple portals, letting humans and monsters inside Kaer Morhen.

The witchers battled the monsters and humans in tandem, each keeping the back of the others. Vesemir fought with Deglan, Luka with Sven. Ciri decided to fight Tetra one on one but the sorceress kept bringing in monsters.

Ciri was getting annoyed. The biggest and meanest monsters were already here and Tetra could just called the small ones. Easy to kill but in abundance and annoying! Fortunately, Tetra was getting tired and Ciri took her shot. The sword went through Tetra's heart like a hot knife in butter.

Tetra looked down, an expression of surprise in her face.

"You're really it. Why? Why do you help these monsters?"

- They're my family. It's not because you had the misfortune to met a bad one that they're all like this. Monsters are more than just horrid looks and claws and teeth. Monsters are born of deeds done. Unforgivable ones." And Tetra the Sorceress was no more.

Ciri took a look around, used her magic to help healing those who were hurt. Thanks Melitele, they weren't many and not that serious. Most of the witchers took care of the last monsters and humans but the rest took the injured ones in the fortress.

Once the battle was over, they met in the Hall.

“What are we going to do now, Ó great White Flame.

- Urgh! You really have been a little shit all your life, huh, Uncle Vesemir?

- Uncle Vesemir?” Deglan asked, surprised.

“Who do you think taught me everything? Of course, I’ve had also help from the surviving witchers but Uncle Vesemir was my main teacher. Whatever you want to complain about, it’s because of him.

- Voilà. This is who you reminded me. Here, I thought Vesemir would have become wiser the older he was.

- Nope! Always the same! Hide it better though!” Deglan moaned of despair.

“The sun is rising. The battle took a long time but fortunately, not as long as I feared. I’ll go to the others and come back with them. Eat, rest, we will have a gathering by midday.” Deglan and Vesemir nodded and Ciri left via portal.



The Lake's group

They were walking for some time when the most experienced witchers told them that the battle had finally begun.

“Do you think it’s going to last long?

- Ciri is the best, Eskel! She will make sure that everyone will be safe and the battle is over quickly.

- *You're awfully sure that she can protect everyone.*

- *She can, Lambert! Ciri is the strongest person in the world!*" The baby in Zofia's arms began to whine. *"Oh, are you hungry little one?"*

- *I think we can stop a little bit to make sure the babies are fed and cleaned.*" Illyana added.

They took a few minutes to make sure the babies were good. They ate and drink a little and they continued their trek to the lake. When they arrived, they organized the camp. They decided to make shifts of three hours to watch. Illyana, Zofia and the babies were given the biggest tent. A thin mattress was spread on the branches's covered ground for the babies to sleep on. Illyana and Zofia had sleeping bags.

Zofia couldn't sleep. She let Illyana sleeping in the tent, with Gwain as protector, just in case. She went to the bonfire and began to play softly on her lute. Eskel and Geralt were sleeping, Lambert and Remus decided to stand guard.

"*Can't sleep?*" asked Remus.

"*Not really. With the time travel, the fight and everything that's happening and with my parents' artistic mind that can go on and on as long as the Muses are whispering to my ears... let say that I'm not ready to go to bed. And you?*" Remus answered first.

"*My parents worked most at night or very early in the morning since my father worked at the port, readying the boats and making sure no extra passenger went on-board and my mother helped in a bakery, so she had to rise very early.*

- *I've nightmares.*" added Lambert.

"*You know, sometimes talking about them alleviate their hold on our mind.*

- *And what sort of idiot told you that?*" She smiled

"*Yourself.*" Remus snorted. Lambert was stunned.

"*Did I... did I talked about them? To whom?*

- I think it was another witcher, one you trusted a lot. But, you know, if you need to talk, I'm here. Illyana and Ciri are here. The others witchers are here. You're not alone, Lambert."

Lambert came closer to the bardess-in-training and put his head on her knees. And softly, quietly, talked about his nightmares. How he was back to his father's house, the man who would beat his wife and kid black and blue. Who would then rape his wife, trying to put another baby in her womb only for him to kill them in a beating before his mother's pregnancy was even too visible.

He talked about how he hated that he got out of here and not his mother. How he saw her in his dreams, blaming him for the beating, asking him why he left without her. How he woke up crying, trying to breath. And he wanted so much go back there and take away his mother.

"My poor little brother... I'm so sorry that it happened to you. You deserve better in life." Remus put a hand on Lambert's shoulder and squeezed. Zofia alternated between kissing the top of his head and stroking his hair. It didn't took long for Lambert to fall asleep.

"His nightmares are really bad, huh?"

- Yes, but I'm happy that you got here. We're not really big on affection's displays.

- Don't I know that! But do not worry! I'm an expert about gestures of affection!!" Zofia said, giggling.

The night on the lake shore was both terrifying (because they didn't know how the battle was going) and nice (because of the music and the bonding they had). Zofia went to bed when Illyana woke up. Remus traded is place with Geralt and Eskel and Lambert replaced Gwain in the tent.

Not long after the sun rose, Ciri appeared not far from them.

"We won! And no casualties except a few scraps that are already mending!" The whole camp cheered. *"We're going to use a portal to the Hall of Kaer Morhen, we're going to rest until noon and then we're going to have gathering. I'll tell you what will going to happen next."*

Around noon, the witchers and the humans emerged from their bedrooms and invaded the hall. Those who didn't need (as much) rest, prepared the meal for everyone. Deglan was still, as the Head of the Witchers, taking his meal at the center of the table but Ciri took the place of the Mage's Chief and Zofia was next to Vesemir.

Once done with the dishes, Ciri took Deglan's place.

"Today was a victorious battle. The Witcher Order survived. But it's only the first battle. I can tell you that nothing is going to be better in the next century for every being who is not human. There is multiple reasons: the Mages first. Particularly those of very high rank. They think of themselves as the gods and goddesses of this Continent, they whisper, hidden behind fake appearance, about how non-humans are a plague, that they steal food, work, spouse, children..."

The royals are no better, they rule by fear, by corruption when they decide to rule and not just enjoy the royal treasury. And finally, the humans. They're both the simplest and hardest. They need to be educated because fear comes from ignorance, but having an education is going to be a very hard chore. I'm not talking about knowing how to read, write and do some basic maths.

- How are we going to do that? It's just us... we're not a kingdom.

- Not yet, Luka. But King Dagread... Blech! I can't believe I'm related to this worm. Dagread is not a well-liked King. He prefers spending money on balls and clothes and jewellery, everything except his people. So, I'm going to send him a nice letter, asking for him to step down and when he refuses, I'll took him from his palace and make sure everyone know his evil deeds before I take off his head.

- You're kidding me? Have you lost your mind?

- I am Cirilla Fiona Elen Riannon, Duchess of Sodden, Princess of Brugge, Suzerain of Attre and Abb Yarra, Queen of Cintra and Skellige, Empress of Nilfgaard." Most of the witchers were gobsmacked. Were there a parcel of land on this Continent that did not belong to her? Vesemir looked at her with a mischievous grin.

"That's impressive. Meh, I'm getting bored. Maybe it will be fun! And honestly, we have nothing to lose.

- We have a lot to lose boy, if she doesn't succeed!

- I will succeed! The Wild Hunt is coming! We need to band together, humans, witchers, mages, elves, dwarves and all non-humans!

- They're really coming, girl?" Asked Deglan, weary. She sent to all present, except for Zofia, the images of the Wild Hunt attacking Kaer Morhen, of Vesemir's Death, of all the remaining witchers' death. Everyone was somber. Vesemir was subdued.

“Unfortunately. I wish I had better news for you.

- So be it! We will try your way first and see what happens from there.

- You’re not going to be disappointed, Deglan, I promise you!”



King Dagread received the letter and read it aloud to his Court.

“To King Dagread of Kaedwen,

Your plot to get rid of the Witcher’s Order with the help of the Sorceress Tetra of Aretuza failed. It was not the goal of the Witcher’s Order to make war to Humans and Humans’s Kingdoms. As long as the witchers were permitted to do their work in peace, got paid what was agreed upon and were treated fairly, they could have cared less about humans pettiness with each other.

But you have decided to use Sorceress Tetra’s hate of witchers to further your own agenda: making the Witcher’s Order so small that you could order them around. This will not pass. You have one week since the reading of this letter to surrender your crown and your kingdom to Cirilla of Kaer Morhen.

After this delay, we are going to have to take you out of your castle and judge you for your crimes against the Witcher’s Order and the people of Kaedwen.

Cirilla of Kaer Morhen, Sorceress and Witcher

Deglan of Kaer Morhen, Witcher, Head of the Order

Zofia Essi of Kaer Morhen, Human Bardess”

Dagread laughed and laughed and so did his Court. One week later, while sleeping soundly in his bed, Cirilla made a portal right into his room. Normally, a portal wouldn’t have worked (the Brotherhood tended to protect its pawns) but since Cirilla was of his blood (no matter how diluted), she could do it. It was a weakness that Mages and Royals did not or would not recognize. All the better for her.



In the middle of the Grande Place, the inhabitants of Ard Carraigh, Kaedwen's Capital, woke up to the ominous sound of a war-horn. Everyone who could fit in there was there. All could see the army of witchers surrounding a podium where a young woman, an old lady and a young girl. Some people thought they were a living sight of Melitele.

*“People of Ard Carraigh! People of Kaedwen! I'm Cirilla of Kaer Morhen and I brought before you today one of the worst, if not **THE** worst, enemy of this kingdom and its people! King Dagread!”*

- How dare you insinuate that the King is against his people! It doesn't make any sense!” One of the noble in the crowd cried out.

“It's so nice of you to ask this question. There will be a trial today, at noon, where the accusations are going to be made and proved. Until then, I will let every one of you, those older than twenty, put your hand in this bag and get a wristband. At noon, twelve of you are going to be chosen to make the jury. So no one can't say it was not a fair trial. Once you got your wristband, please, evacuate so others can come and get theirs.”

At noon, twelve wristbands glowed. They were a mix a men and women, human and not, young and old. Ciri spoke up.

“King Dagread, you stand here to answer the accusations of corruption, attempted murders and murders.

- We are the King, We can do whatever We like!

- No, you can't. This trial is going to prove it. Judges, can we begin?”

The twelve judges, chosen by magic, nodded.

“Dagread of Kaedwen,” began Zofia “we accuse you of corruption. You have, against the Ruler's of Kaedwen Charter, Charter that your ancestors and yourself signed, used your title, first as Prince then as King, to pay your way out of crimes you have committed and for which you should have been put on trial.

I'll begin by the excerpt in the Charter.

‘Be it known that Us, rulers of Kaedwen, swear to represent Our Role and Our Kingdom with dignity and integrity. That Our first and foremost concern is the well-being of the people of Kaedwen.

Be it known that if one of Us, or a member of the Royal Family, had used their power to commit a crime, that they should be put on trial and judged fairly, as any Kaedweni.'

As any King before you, you signed this Charter."

Zofia showed the signature to the Judges and then showed it to the crowd.

"Fifteen years ago, when you were still crown Prince, you decided that your sister's maid, Agnes, was fair play and you raped her. You then used your title and some guards to make sure that she didn't talk about it."

In the Royal Box, Dagread's sister, Marion, swore and cursed her brother. Agnes came to testify, with her 14 years old boy in tow, picture perfect of his father, except for the fact that he looked kind.

And more and more horrendous crimes were exposed: nobles who didn't agreed with him and mysteriously disappeared (they were, in fact, in the dungeons, their faces in an iron mask and their voice magically cut, so they couldn't tell who they were); mistresses that weren't attractive anymore to him were experimented on by Tetra. Not a lot of them survived, particularly the first ones; the crimes against the witchers, of course; the nobles he paid to make sure some laws didn't pass in their own lands...

Dagread didn't have any other defence that he was King and therefore, could do whatever he wanted. As the sun set in the horizon, the verdict was clear. Dagread failed as King and was guilty of the crimes he was accused of. Cirilla took his head herself.

"As decided by the last members of the Royal Family of Kaedwen and by the Wolf Witchers, I, Cirilla of Kaer Morhen, will take the title of High Queen of Kaer Morhen and Kaedwen. Under my authority, a Queen or a King, vassal of the Kingdom of Kaer Morhen, will ensure that the Laws enacted by the Kingdom of Kaer Morhen, for all its lands, are set up and applied equally for all."

It took two weeks to make sure everything was top notch. The rules were straightforward and fair:

*There would be no persecution or discrimination against non-humans.

*Crimes would still be judged and sentenced by severity but there would be two reasons for harsher or lighter verdict: aggravating or mitigating circumstances.

*School would be mandatory and free of charge for children between six and sixteen, with the possibility, for those who had the intellect but not the money to get into Oxenfurt to have a scholarship.

*Witchers were going to work in team of 3 or more...

There were the things that would be implemented immediately but Ciri and Zofia assured that the *'Book of Kaedwen's Laws'* would soon be sent to every cities and villages of Kaedwen.

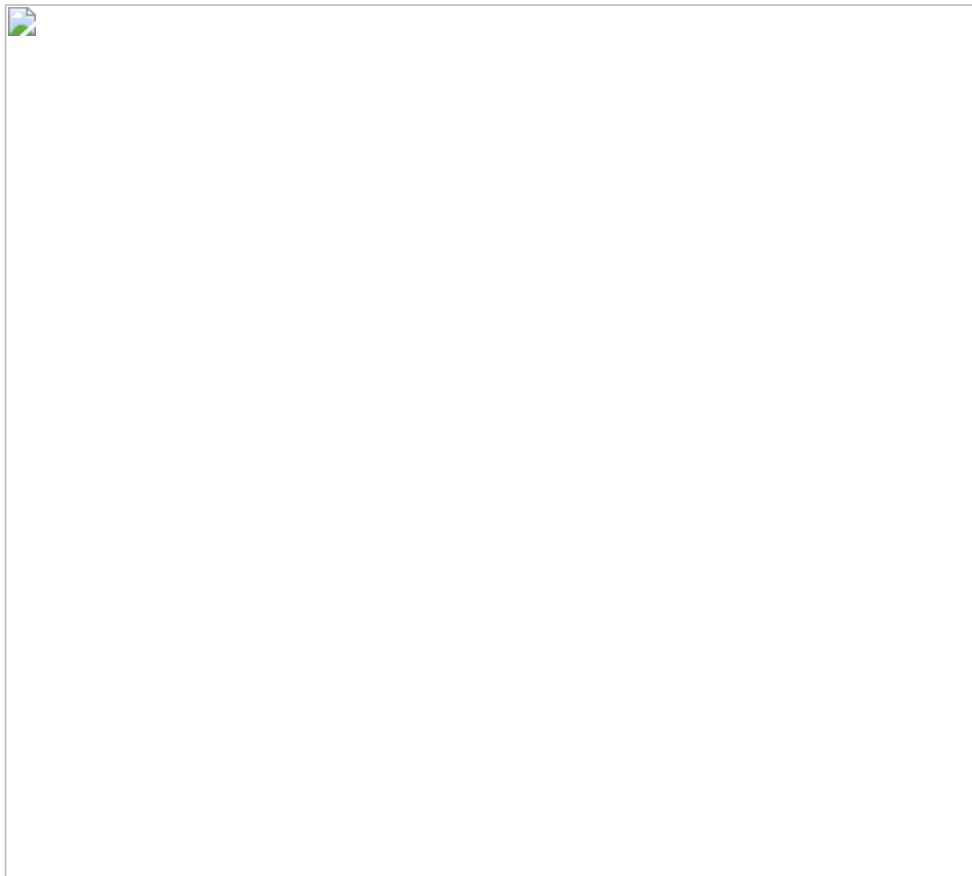
When Cirilla arrived to Kaer Morhen, she knew something was, not wrong per say, but out of place. Every single witchers was waiting for her in front of the great doors.

Deglan greeted her.

"Cirilla, High Queen of Kaer Morhen and Kaedwen, we welcome you in your home and give you the symbol of your power."

Illyana was the one to present her crown to Ciri. A beautiful silver crown with a wolf in the center. Simple but beautiful. Cirilla get on her knees and let Lady Zerbst crown her.

The cheers, whistles, and words of encouragement she received that day would be stuck in her mind forever.



Chapter 2

Kaer Morhen, 3 months after Cirilla's coronation, end of 1165

The 'Book of Kaedwen's Laws' was printed in enough numbers and ready to go to each cities and villages. Groups of witchers would take them on the Path and, while patrolling, were to give them to the person in charge of the law and, at least, one another person able to read correctly. Most of time, it would be the healer or the hedge-witch.

Vesemir was Lady Zerbst's escort to her home. He met her three daughters, their husbands and children. They were very nice, having heard about their '*dear mama's friend who went to become a witcher*' all their childhood. Their husbands were more reluctant but perfectly polite, asking about monster's business and if people of others kingdoms would still be able to hire witchers since they were now '*The Army of another Kingdom*'. .

"Our dear High-Queen sent a message to all the kingdoms. In no way the witchers will invade others Kingdoms, unless they attack first, be it the witchers hired to deal with a monsters or those who were granted sanctuary or nationality by Cirilla and are still moving toward their new home."

But the children... The children were a complete joy. Unafraid, curious, mischievous... They reminded Vesemir of Illyana when she was young, before he left. The youngest one, not even a year old, was absolutely adorable and was apparently in love with his beard. Ielena was a chubby blond baby, with blue eyes (if it was the definitive colour, no one knew yet) who love babbling.

Her mother, Illyana's youngest daughter Silva, laughed that she will either be a politician or a bardess, with how much she liked to talk. Vesemir agreed with that statement. He spent two weeks with Illyana's family and was sad when it ended. He really liked them and he would miss Illyana a lot. He didn't knew how large a part of him she was until she was back in his life.

Like the saying goes, '*you don't know what you have until you lost it*'. That's why he was flabbergasted when he saw carriages and people and children waiting.

"Illyana? What's happening?"

- Well, I decided that it was time for me to retire from the political arena and to embrace fully my role of matron of an orphanage. Cirilla is fully aware and gave her blessing. She was very excited to know that I would continue my charity work and have an orphanage near Kaer Morhen. She and Zofia apparently love children and Zofia said she was going to, with my permission, that she got, help with their education. Ciri even said that she was going to see if some of them could be mages and train the ones who could be. Isn't it exciting, Vesemir?

- *You... You come back with me?*" She put her hand on his cheek.

"Of course, this is where I belong, isn't it?" Vesemir gave her a shy smile and kissed her quickly.

"Of course it is."

When they finally arrived at Ard Carr a igh, Zofia was here to greet them. She explained to Vesemir (because Illyana was in the confidence of whatever Cirilla had cooked) that she was here to show them the road to the orphanage. The witcher thought that his older-other-self taught her the art of sneaking too well.

The manor, or was it a small castle?, was huge, Honestly, manor seemed too little a word for such a building.

"Zofia... How the hell did you do that in so little time?"

- *Well, we have a bunch of witchers, meaning we could work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. And do not forget our dear witcheress Ciri who helped with her chaos. Your house and its surroundings is fully protected against whatever we could remember: fire, monsters, rising water, thieves, wild animals...*

- *Wow! Wait, **our** house?"* Illyana answered

"I know we didn't discuss it, but I would like it if we live together here."

- *Are you sure. I'll need to go to Kaer Morhen every day.*

- *It's not like it's very far away" peeped Zofia. "And I'm sure we can have a rotation like one week you come to Kaer Morhen, the next week the trainees come to you. That could be good for the children too."*

Vesemir pondered for a few minutes. That could be a good solution and he was loath to part with his dear childhood friend and love. He agreed and they began to visit their home while the sun finished his setting, giving the lake the colour of red wine.



<https://youtu.be/ucqReyBoEeU>



Throughout the Continent, news that the royal line of Kaedwen has fallen spread. And to a witcher-sorceress no less? The information was met with various reactions.

The royals and nobles feared that she was coming for them next. In and out of Kaedwen (not all Kaedweni nobility was present that day in the Capital) they were anxious to read a letter from or see the family members who were present that day.

For the human population, particularly in Kaedwen, it was disbelief and some sort of vindictive happiness. Maybe now, they would not be seen as just cattle for the blue-blood.

For the non-humans, it was hope. Hope that someone could give them a land where they would be welcomed and treated with respect. A lot of them practically jumped on the first witcher they saw and asked if what they heard about the laws in Kaedwen was true. And it was! Never, outside of war time, there was such a massive flux of population converging to the same land.

Cirilla and the witchers obviously thought about it and greeted them at the border. Some checkpoints were decided before the teams were sent off on the Path and they told the non-humans about it. Of course, some of them would avoid the checkpoints out of fear for their life or those of their children but it wasn't a problem.

Groups of people were sent to their new location with a group of six witchers for protection and new villages were built. Some villages welcomed the new population. It wasn't always easy but new hands helping with the crops or people with skills needed, like healing or smithing made the things go more smoothly.



Kaer Morhen, 10 years after Cirilla's coronation, 1175

Kaer Morhen was a flurry of activity. The tenth anniversary of the coronation was a special event which required to be prepared long in advance given all the things involved, from deciding exactly what the event would entail to obviously, getting the things decided done. Letters were sent to the nobility of Kaedwen and Redania and the royal families of the other kingdoms, rooms were prepared to welcome their guests.

The kingdom of Kaer Morhen signed peace treaties with the other kingdoms in the first couple of years of its existence. To ensure a peaceful beginning to their newborn kingdom and to make sure they would have something to fall back in case one of them decided to attack.

And sure enough, five years after in 1170, Radovid IV, despite the warning of his father, the 72 years old Vizimir the first, attacked a small village between Yspaden and Gelibol, west of Ard Carraigh. He probably thought that no one will see his intrusion, the village being isolated and surrounded by forest.

Unfortunately for him, a witcher named Osbert, who was an instructor, remembered that he got a young Klef in a village between Nilfgaard and Vicovaro, when Torres var Emreis, in 1140, tried to take possession of the Duchy. Knowing that some people would probably wait until the dust has cleared to attempt something, they gave every village and settlements a 'warning bell'.

Each bell was linked specifically to their location and as soon as the one linked to Griffin hedge rang, Cirilla and some of the most experienced witchers, twenty-five in total, went through the portal, Cirilla closing it. It didn't take very long to win the fight since it was a small company of around a hundred soldiers with a captain: Gedymin von Everec.

Gedymin and all soldiers who put their weapons down (most of them young ones who were fed stories about monstrous witchers) were still alive when Cirilla transported all of them right in the middle of Radovid's Court, so they could tell that what the king ordered them to do. A lot of nobles, particularly those who still remembered their elven roots, weren't impressed by the king's 'project'.

Radovid lost his head and Queen Fiametta and their young son, Heribert, were left alone since they didn't know of Radovid's stupid idea. She decided to go back to her family, the Royal Family of Cidaris with her son until it was time for him to get an education at Oxenfurt.

_ He would become, later, the first historian granted access to Kaer Morhen and would write ‘History of the Continent and its Kingdoms’, the book of reference for every single History lover out there. He also was, involuntarily, the hero of one of the most beautiful and happy-ending story ever created when he ended up marrying the daughter of a minor lord who was relegated to the status of servant by her step-mother and her two step-sisters. ‘Ashley or The Little Glass Sandal’ was written by an author known as Buttercup. _

Illyana, now eighty, was having the time of her life. She could, “*finally!*” , prepare a royal festival with all the goodies and get rid of all the stiffy stuff. She prepared the witchers the best she could, and honestly most of them were absolutely lovely. She struck an amazing friendship with Luka and Sven, who were the beloved uncles of her orphaned children. She was very, *very* happy.

_ Ten years later, in 1185 , a few days after the twentieth anniversary, Illyana closed her eyes for the last time at the old age of ninety, next to Vesemir, smiling as the sun rose for the new year and covered the lake and her face with a warm light. At the funeral, Ielena stayed near a crying Vesemir, putting her first child in his arms so she could play the lute for him. The baby was Alfred Szymon Pankratz of Lettenhove. _



Oxenfurt, 1171 (one year after Radovid’s Death)

Zofia, after this mess with Radovid, decided to finish her schooling at Oxenfurt and to be a ‘Master of the Seven Liberal Arts’, like her parents . She still miss her father and her mother a lot but with the witchers and Cirilla and Illyana, she found herself able more and more to remember them fondly. Her pain was very subdued.

She had, also, a gigantic crush on Remus, Uncle Geralt’s brother. It was better than, say, Lambert, who she knew as an adult. She never knew Remus, he died long before she was even born. Her father was only 21 at the time! She didn’t know if the crush would stay a crush or evolve in something else but she decided that maybe, a little bit of distance would do her some good.

She was a good student, with good marks and her identity as the High-Queen’s sister didn’t get out so, a win for her. Except for her rivalry with Flamenca, a trobairitz from Toussaint. It was always very tensed when they were in the same room. But now she could understand her father’s rivalry with Valdo Marx if Valdo was half as insufferable as Flamenca!

She graduated Summa Cum Laude, like her mother and father and the presence of the High-Queen herself would be the talk for the next ten years. Illyana and Vesemir congratulated her and even Remus gave her a hug. Yeah, her crush was still here. But, at least, now she knew and could act accordingly.



“Lettenhove,

1st January of 1222,

Dear Grandpa Vesemir,

It is my pleasure to write to you that my son and daughter-in-law have had their first son and third child a few hours ago. His name is Julian Alfred Pankratz and he's apparently a very active baby.

I don't know if it's a coincidence that he was born just as the sun rose on the first day of the new year but I like to think that a part of grandma Illyana has come back to us.

I miss you, Grandpa, and I think I'm going to pull an Illyana and come to the orphanage to spend my last years. It's not going to be right at the moment, I have grandchildren to spoil after all.

My next letter will have more details and maybe a drawing of the baby.

I love you,

Your granddaughter,

Ielena.”



Kaer Morhen's Infirmary, 13 September 1240

The infirmary of Kaer Morhen was empty, minus the two sorceresses working there: Triss Merigold and Yennefer of Vengerberg. Each of them were bought in Kaer Morhen after a royal fuck-up that they tried to correct.

First it was Triss, in 1237, when a stryga began her terrible deeds in the kingdom of Temeria. Sven, Remus and Eskel were sent to deal with it. Zofia gave them a pendant and made them swear that they will never take it off. It was a good thing since the stryga tried to feast on Remus. The shield sent the stryga flying, hitting a wall and it gave them enough time that the witchers could chain her until sunrise.

Lord Ostrit was found guilty but Foltest thought that the sorceress could have done more to save his niece/daughter sooner. Triss didn't take that lightly as she always tried to do the right thing and she would not have let a child suffer if she could have prevented it. The stryga went through eating her mother's body before being strong enough to get out of the crypt. She couldn't right a wrong if she didn't know there was a wrong in the first place!

The second was Yennefer a few months ago. She was protecting Queen Kalis when she was attacked by the Mage Ronin. Fortunately, a group of witchers was near and heard the commotion. Kalis then asked for sanctuary and got it.

After a talk with Ciri via xenovox, she teleported herself to where Yennefer was. She was the first time she saw what was essentially her mother-figure in this life and it was a little bit unnerving. Kaer Morhen added Lyria to its vassals.

They were in the middle of preparing a potion when the alarms went off and someone appeared in the middle of the room.

"It's Julian!" exclaimed Triss, walking toward the person whimpering on the floor. *"Go tell Vesemir, Zofia or Ciri! Quick!"* Yennefer left as soon as she helped Triss put him on a bed.

A few minutes after, Vesemir was the first one to enter Triss' territory.

"Triss, what happened?"

- For what I could see from his mind... his mind is crying so loud Vesemir... he was finishing his packaging when Valdo Marx tried to...tried to..." she pointed at his torn clothes. *"Apparently, he didn't support that Julian didn't want him."*

A growl of rage came from the door, Geralt was here, looking feral and ready to kill. Vesemir talked to him:

"Geralt, you'll stay with Julian. As his eldest family member, I'll take care of that poor excuse for a troubadour!"

Geralt met Julian Alfred Pankratz when the young viscount was three years old. He was on the Path with the rest of his team and Vesemir asked him to make a stop by Lettenhove, to see if everything was good. Ielena welcomed them with open arms and little Julian with tiny squeezed hugs to their legs.

When he looked down, he saw bright blue eyes and a big smile with tiny pearly white teeth. The young child seemed to take a liking at Geralt in particular, babbling, ‘playing music’, pointing things with his finger to ask what it was.

Jaskier stirred and open his eyes a bit.

“*Ves 'mir...*”

- *My boy, what happened?*

- *Valdo...*” began Julian, his voice slurring “*got a bottle o’ wine. I’d one glass, promise... Ev’rythin’ go blur...*”

- *He probably put something in the wine...*” Cirilla walked in.

“*Oh! Julian...*”

- *Au’tie...*”

It was decided that Cirilla, Zofia, Vesemir would go to Lettenhove first and then would portal to Oxenfurt. Geralt wanted to come but Julian begged him to stay. Julian’s, who will be better known by his bardic name Jaskier, parents were livid.

Valdo Marx thought his ties with Cidaris’ royal family or the fact that he was in the good graces of the Chancellor of the University, would make him immune to revenge. The Chancellor cleaned his hands after hearing what he had done and Valdo lost his head to Vesemir’s sword.

Even centuries later, no one with a right mind would ever ‘do a Valdo Marx’. It was a clear crime, not done in the spur of the moment, but planned in advance. The sentence was death. _



Kaer Morhen, 1260

Zofia should be very old by now. But she wasn’t. She grew up and apparently stopped ageing at thirty-five years old or so. She was not going to look a gift horse in the mouth.

It was a good thing since she was in love with Remus. It wasn't always easy, particularly when she was young and fresh out of the University. Since he was, at the time, in a relationship with Flamenca. Urgh. But whatever, they have been together for 20 years and she was very happy.

The fact that Jaskier seemed to have stopped ageing as well led to the conclusion that, maybe, the Pankratz weren't that much one hundred percent human. And with the Sorceresses, including Ciri, looking at their blood, it was not long before they learned that, the Pankratz of the past had a very wild taste in partners.

Elves, obviously, but also dwarves, succubi and incubi, Higher Vampire or Nosferat, every beings vaguely human-shaped. Zofia and Jaskier looked humans but their blood very well wasn't. Apparently, being so close to Cirilla's Chaos made something spark and activate 'non-human' traits that were beneficial for them.

Zofia had become, by blood if not by appearance, an elf. She walked even more graciously than before; her voice was even more beautiful; she didn't age at a human rate, obviously; and she could feel Chaos and somehow, wove it into her music. Not a lot, but her music has more impact on her environment.

Jaskier... No one will probably ever found what was the cause and what was the consequence, but it seemed that Jaskier developed the cubare's (*a.n.: cubare is one of the latin word forming succubi & incubi. It means lying down*) part. Meaning he was neither succubi or incubi but a bit of both. Let say that Geralt was more than happy to test Jaskier's limits with his gift. Thanks Melitele for small blessings like privacy wards and such.



Kaer Morhen, 1270

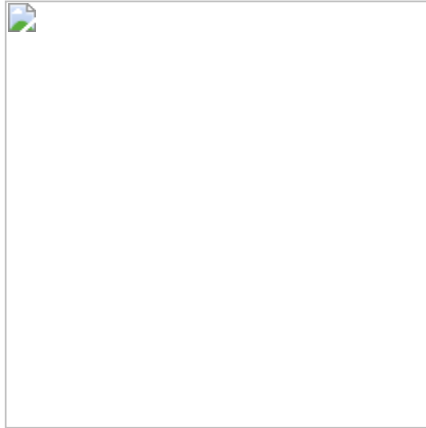
Cirilla has been celebrating her 125's birthday two days prior. She knew that the Wild Hunt would be coming, she felt it. Everyone in the keep was ready to fight them. All humans were safe in Oxenfurt, Cirilla wanted them as far as possible from Kaer Morhen.

Zofia and Jaskier were still here, as support. They would stay in the background, using their powers to protect the medical field and boost their friends stamina.

Once their powers discovered, Zofia and Jaskier decided to train them. Zofia could sing an '*encouragement*' song and, not only boost the moral of the warriors but could also diminish the cost of casting a spell or a sign. Jaskier could transform in a '*cubare*' form, horns and legs and, being coupled to his mean streak, meant that his physical attacks were very strong and could cause a lot of damages.

When the Wild Hunt appeared, time stopped. All the people there should have freeze too. Because she knew of this, Cirilla, with the help of the witchers and mages, found a solution to that problem. The enemies were surprised, that for sure.

Cirilla took a deep breath and, at her signal, engaged the combat.



It was a long battle, but with a century to elaborate the best outcome possible, the casualties were very low: Deglan died protecting Ciri, replacing Vesemir's death.

Dermot Marranga was a casualty also but he was so bitter with how things were done that Cirilla had to put spies on him to make sure he didn't become a renegade again.

Jad Karadin tried to kill Cirilla from behind when she was battling with Eredin. The King of the Wild Hunt didn't like that and killed the brazen witcher.

Zofia was exhausted and Jaskier got a scar on his face (the one who did that didn't survived Geralt's wrath), all-in-one, everyone was tired to the bones and needed a very long rest. They would bring back the non-fighters from Oxenfurt in a day or two.



Kaer Morhen, Summer 1271

Kaer Morhen was rejoicing. Today was Zofia and Remus' wedding day. It took a long time for these two to tie the knot but they were finally here. Cirilla was happy for her sister, she deserved all the happiness in the world.

Since it was the wedding of a royal family member, royals of all the Continent were here.

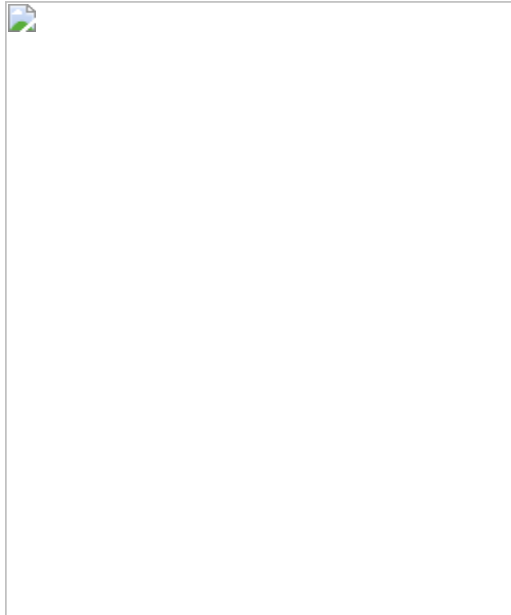
From Nilfgaard, Pavetta and Emhyr var Emreis and their three children (the eldest, born two years after Cirilla real date of birth, was a boy named Artos). Cirilla was plagued by visions just before the death of her grandfather. She couldn't stop the Usurper to take the throne but she could prevent her father to become an asshole.

Just before the unknown mage, who has been Stregobor in disguise (he was hiding since she took apart his plans for the Black Sun's Girls and became '*persona non grata*' everywhere on the Continent), could cast his curse, Cirilla appeared and killed him.

She brought Emhyr, that she renamed Duny, for security reasons, to Kaer Morhen and put him under the tutelage of Lambert. Their personalities clashed a lot but Duny wasn't stuck in the past and, even if he was a shrewd little piece of work, he loved his wife and their children and wouldn't do the tenth of what her own father did.

Calanthe and Eist were there too, with their fifteen years old's son, Tīg. The young boy, with Eist's dark hair and Eist's mischievous glint in his eyes, was born in 1255 and was the best friend of his nephew Artos. The Continent wasn't going to survive both of them as Kings.

It was a real surprise when the announcement was made. Cirilla always wanted siblings but with her parents's death (at least the death of one of them) and then her grandmother finding herself too old to bear a child... Cirilla brought a gift to the new parents herself. And if she wove a spell to protect the little boy, no one had to know (except Mousesack, of course).



With new, and far less deadly, methods to create witchers, Cirilla decided to divide them into different schools.

- The Wolf School as the first school was the leader. Wolf Witchers's skills were more rounded, even if not as powerful as some others. Eskel's signs an obvious exception. They were the public face of law enforcement.

- The Cat School was the most acrobatic one, their witchers having the grace of their animal. It was a bonus for the more tricky monsters like vampires or wraith. They were the hidden side of the law enforcement.

Aiden, who had been friend with both Voltehere and Lambert since he came to Kaer Morhen a year after Cirilla's coronation, was one of the first to switch school the moment they were created. There was a bet about when these three idiots would confess their love to each other.



- The Viper School's member were very silent on their feet and pretty good with poison, every type of poison. Most of them were as slim and bendable as the picture we had of a snake but some, like Letho of Gulet, were bulky like the constrictor snakes found in Zerrikania. The second mission of the Vipers was espionage.

- The Bear School created very tall, very broad and very grumpy witchers. They were the ones at the head of the missions against trolls and others very *'hard to kill because strength or impenetrable skins'* monsters. They were also the ones who took rescue missions from natural disasters.

- The Griffin School was the home of the *'Knights Witchers'*. Like the Wolves Witchers, they were well rounded even if they were better at signs and therefore, more of use against Mages or magical monsters. They were also the diplomats and Luka decided to be on the team of the one dealing with Filavandrel. They were an odd couple but, well, if they worked...

- If the Manticore School offered you a drink, please deny them graciously. For the Witchers of this school are very good at potions and alchemy and brewing alcohol. Witcher-level alcohol. They were the ones in charge of the creating, refining and brewing potions for all the keep.

- Finally, the Crane School was the home of the creative minds. One of the first order Cirilla gave them was to create a place for their experimentation that wouldn't blow up, burn, melt or anything else. They use their brilliant minds to protect Kaer Morhen and their brothers with their amazing engineering. They were also in charge of the urban planning and others land use planning.



When Kitsu went home, after she discovered Tetra's treason, she didn't know what to expect. Loneliness was a given. She didn't expect the Elder Blood to come to her home and to talk to her like she wasn't a monster.

She came with the old wolf Deglan. She smelled his scent on the Mages who experimented on her but she never saw him before. He apologized, telling her that he was in an agreement to breed new monsters but not to use children. His job, after all, was to kill monsters. Monsters evolved or new ones can make their apparition, since no one knew anything about the Conjunction. She couldn't even be mad at him, he was right.

Little Nesa, the young elf taken into Filavandrel's custody was missing her. Kitsu decided to live near Nesa and so, near the elven settlement. It wasn't easy, sometimes Filavandrel and Kitsu clashed over Nesa's education but they both love the child dearly so decided to make it work somehow.

When Luka became Filavandrel's significant other, he decided to take the role of the fun uncle. So, when the Elf King and the Mahr-Elf girl decided to butthead with each other, Luka would 'kidnap' Nesa and some others elven children and have fun.

Nesa became one of the greatest sorceress of all time and took a shine at every hybrid child that cross her path. She never married, even if she had a lot of lovers over time, and never had any biological children but adopted all those she could and wanted to have her as a mother. Nesa's legacy was not going to get lost any time soon.



The Continent, end of 1300

"I've never saw anything like this..."

- What do you think it is, Ciri?"

Weather seemed to have become completely crazy. In less than a year, the temperature rose, as the sea level, drowning most of the coastal villages and cities.

“Something is going to happen.” added Jaskier. “Maybe another Conjunction?”

It was a possibility. But just waiting wasn't good enough. They had already helped moving, sometimes literally, cities inland. They would prepare for every extreme weather they could think of. Until they know more of what the hell was happening.



The Continent, 1305

It took five years to know what exactly was going on. During the summer solstice, multiple portals opened all over the Continent.

One of them opened near Kaer Morhen, Ciri and the Witchers ready to battle whatever came out of it. There was no need for it since it was apparently refugees from another world.

They looked like humanoid animals: feline, canine, bear, snake, bird... Let say that the people of Kaer Morhen was as fascinated by the new arrivals as the people of Golgolles, The Azure Vales, was of the Witchers.

Unfortunately, not all portals brought friends. New species of monsters and particularly sea monsters, bigger and stronger than the one they knew, made their apparition. It was at this moment that the Crane's ingenuity came at the rescue.

They made new weapons, made of a black powder found east of Zerrikania. They created, what they called, a gun to help fighting these monsters from a distance. The biggest ones were killed by canons made especially for those hunts.

It wasn't easy, particularly at the beginning but they made it work eventually. New witchers, new mages, new scholars came and went, Kaer Morhen their home and place of rest when they began to get too old. Most of the first witchers had became teachers with Vesemir as their Head.

Cirilla just prayed that it would stay like this for a long time.



And it did. It did stay somewhat stable for four millenniums. Ciri was the only one still alive, even if she took of witchering again after most of her family died.

Vesemir was the first and he was buried next to Illyana. Geralt, Jaskier, Zofia and Remus were cremated, as per their wishes and their ashes scattered in the wind. The bards always had been free spirits and their husbands were loath to be separated of them even in death.

One by one, even the Mages began to die and, if it was known that she was the most powerful of them all, she couldn't be seen as immortal. So, when she deemed enough time had passed, she faked her death and disappeared. She kept an eye on the state of the world but barely intervened.

She was in front of the tower on Undvik, opening the portal and facing the White Frost. She remembered everything that happened in her life, every relationship she had, all the love she felt for and from her family.

She took a step forward.

She felt herself burning from the inside.

She was remade.

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